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UM bestows honorary doctorate on tribal college leader

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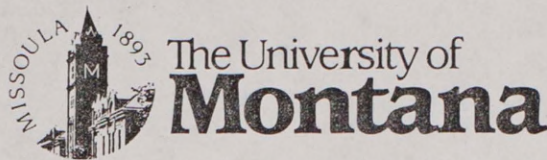
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NEWS RELEASE

May 6, 2005

Contact: President George Dennison, (406) 243-2311.

UM BESTOWS HONORARY DOCTORATE ON TRIBAL COLLEGE LEADER

MISSOULA –

Joe McDonald, president of Salish Kootenai College in **Pablo**, will receive The University of Montana's highest recognition – an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters – during Commencement ceremonies Saturday, May 14.

In addition to receiving the honorary degree, McDonald will deliver the send-off address to the graduating class of 2005. A UM alumnus himself, McDonald will speak during the 9:30 a.m. ceremony for the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Technology and again at 2 p.m. for the professional schools ceremony.

A prominent, national leader in American Indian education and higher education, McDonald founded Salish Kootenai College on the Flathead Reservation in 1978, and he has served as its president ever since.

“Joe McDonald, more than any other person, embodies American Indian education,” said UM President George Dennison. “He provided the leadership that resulted in the designation of the Tribal Colleges as Land Grant Colleges and has participated in every endeavor to assure their increasing effectiveness.

“Quite clearly, the movement he did so much to further has made a tremendous difference for all Americans. As one of our most distinguished alumni with three degrees from The

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University of Montana, we feel honored that he will accept this well-earned recognition.”

Kathryn Shanley, director of UM’s Native American Studies Department, nominated McDonald for the honorary doctorate in recognition of the role he has played in furthering education for American Indians. “Education continues to be key to the future prosperity of American Indian people and thriving of American Indian communities,” she said. “Dr. McDonald has led the way in illuminating that path.”

McDonald serves as president of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium, which helps maintain standards of quality in Indian education and supports the development of tribal colleges, as well as legislation and policymaking to support Indian higher education. He also serves on the boards of the American Council on Education and the American Indian College Fund, and he is a member of the Commission on Colleges and Universities of the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges.

He previously served on the coordinating committee for the W.K. Kellogg Initiative: Capturing the Dream, a program that awards money to tribal colleges and universities; the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching; and the committee for the Ford Foundation’s Rural Community College Initiative, which helps community colleges become leaders in business development in rural, economically depressed areas.

McDonald earned his two-year elementary teaching certificate from Western Montana College in 1953 and for the next 11 years taught elementary students and high school science and

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physical education at schools across Montana, including **Hamilton, Plevna** and **Miles City**. He also coached football, basketball, baseball and track.

He returned to college at UM to earn a bachelor's in education in 1958, a master's in physical education and recreation in 1964, and a doctorate in educational administration/supervision and curriculum and instruction in 1981.

During 1965-68, he was a physical education instructor and basketball coach at Northern Montana College (now Montana State University-Northern) in **Havre**, where he also coached track and served as sponsor of Indian Club. From 1976 to 1982, he coordinated a program that established extension centers on the Blackfeet and Flathead Reservations for **Kalispell's** Flathead Valley Community College. These centers grew into Salish Kootenai College and Blackfeet Community College.

Today Salish Kootenai College delivers post-secondary education to residents of the Flathead and Spokane Indian Reservations, serving students from more than 45 tribes.

McDonald previously received honorary doctorates from Gonzaga and Montana State Universities.

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